

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FOR IO ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: FAO, AORG, EAGR
SUBJ: FAO PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET 1978-1979

REF: A) STATE 96611, B) ROME 6881, C) STATE 91895

SUMMARY

I HAD AN INTERESTING AND USEFUL DISCUSSION OF THE FAO TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM PROBLEM WITH THE GEVENA GROUP FRIDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 29. ALL MEMBERS AGREE WITH US ON THE PRINCIPLE OF CENTRAL FUNDING OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THROUGH UNDP, AND THE NEED TO PHASE OUT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES BY FAO AND OTHER UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. THE ROME REPRESENTATIVES DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WE CAN PERSUADE FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO AGREE TO, OR NEGOTIATE, AN ABANDONMENT OF THE 1978-1979 TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL IN THE SUMMARY PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET. EVEN IN THE LONGER RANGE THEY HAVE DOUBTS OF ACHIEVING AGREEMENT TO ABANDON THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, BUT SEVERAL SUGGEST REDEFINITIONS OF THE PROGRAM, TO ELIMATE ANY CONFLICT WITH UNDP, AS THE MOST PROMISING APPROACH. ONLY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADA, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM WERE PREPARED TO INDICATE ON A PERSONAL BASIS THAT THEY WERE REASONABLY SURE THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD JOIN WITH US IN A DEMARCHE. I BELIEVE MOST

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OF THE GENEVA GROUP COUNTRIES WILL PROVE WILLING TO JOIN IN A STATMENT OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES, BUT IT IS QUESTIONABLE, WHETHER THEY WOULD OPPOSE OR VOTE AGAINST THE 1978-1979 PROGRAM PROPOSAL. IN ADDITION TO ASKING THE REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT THEIR GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO JOIN IN A DEMARCHE, I ASKED THEM TO OBTAIN THEIR GOVERNMENTS' VIEWS ON A) REDEFINING THE FAO TEXHNNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM QUANTITATIVELY OR

QUALITATIVELY, AND B) SETTING A PROCEDURE AND NEAR-FUTURE TIME FOR RE-EXAMINING AND EVALUATING THE PROGRAM. MY APPOINTMENT WITH DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA HAS BEEN DEFERRED FROM MONDAY, MAY 2, TO SOME INDEFINITE TIME LATER IN THE WEEK, FOR SEVERAL REASONS.
END SUMMARY

1. THE GENEVA GROUP HAD SCHEDULED A MEETING FRIDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 29, WITH THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES OF FAO AS THE FIRST ITEM OF THE AGENDA. U.S. CO-CHAIRMAN NORRED TURNED OVER THE HANDLING OF THIS ITEM TO ME. WE HAD AN HOUR AND A HALF DISCUSSION, IN WHICH ALL COUNTRIES PARTICIPATED, TO THE EVIDENT BENEFIT OF ALL.

2. I EXPLAINED TO THE GROUP, AS I HAD TO DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA, THE REASONS FOR OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE FAO TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS GIVING INCREASED EMPHASIS TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND TO UN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIFICALLY IS SEEKING AN INCREASE IN OUR CONTRIBUTION TO UNDP. CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, INCLUDING MANY WHO FAVOR THE UN AND PARTICULARLY FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES, FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RALLY SUPPORT, HOWEVER, WHEN THE UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES ARE CONTINUING AND INCREASING THEIR REGULAR ASSESSED BUDGETS. WE ADHERE TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE CONSENSUS ON UN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THAT THESE ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE FUNDED ON THE BASIS OF VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS, AND NOT ON THE BASIS OF ASSESSMENTS OF REGULAR BUDGETS VOTED BY THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. THIS LATTER SYSTEM HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY USED IN RECENT YEARS. IF IT CONTINUES, IT THREATENS TO BREAK DOWN THE ENTIRE UN SYSTEM. I TOLD THE GROUP I HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DISCUSSED THIS WITH DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA, BUT DID NOT GO INTO ANY DETAIL ABOUT THAT CONVERSATION BEYOND SAYING HE HAD INSISTED NONETHELESS UPON CONTINUING HIS TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, WHICH CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO THE GROUP.

3. THE U.K. CO-CHAIRMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE PROBLEM IS NOT PECULIAR TO FAO, AND URGED THAT IT BE MADE CLEAR THAT WE ARE NOT SIGNLING OUTXTHE FAO TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM. SOME OTHERS METIONED THIS IN THE COURSE OF THEIR COMMENTS. MY RESPONSE WAS TO LIKEN OUR ACTION TO A POLICEMAN FINING A SPEEDING DRIVER, WHO COMPLAINS THAT OTHERS WERE GOING EVEN FASTER: THE ANSWER IS THAT WE WILL GET TO THE OTHERS AS WELL. IN DUE COURSE. (COMMENT: OUR POSITION SHOULD BE PHRASED IN GENERAL TERMS, NOT FOCUSED JUST ON FAO.) THE NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE MENTIONED THAT WORLD BANK AND REGIONAL BANK FUNDING IS SEPARATE FROM UNDP. I RESPONDED THAT THIS IS A DIFFERENT TYPE OF DUPLICATION, WHICH BOTHERS US LESS BECAUSE THE FUNDS ARE ALL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. MOREOVER, THE BANKS DEAL WITH OVER-ALL COUNTRY PROGRAMMING RATHER THAN WITH

SECTORAL JUDGEMENTS.

4. ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSENSUS, AND SPECIFICALLY OF THE CHANNELING OF FUNDING THROUGH UNDP, WAS AFFIRMED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE COUNTRIES. THE SWEDISH REPRESENTATIVE WAS THE ONLY ONE QUALIFIED HIS ENDORSEMENT: HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT OBJECT IN PRINCIPLE TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES BY UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, BUT IT DOES INSIST THAT SUCH ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH THE ROLE OF UNDP. SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING THOSE OF AUSTRALIA, FRANCE AND THE NETHERLANDS FELT CONSTRAINED TO EXPLAIN THAT THEY HAD ACCEPTED THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM LAST YEAR RELUCTANTLY UNDER THE FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES -- THE UNDP LIQUIDITY CRISIS, THE PRECEDENT OF SUCH PROGRAMS IN OTHER SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, THE GENERALLY-DESIRABLE POLICIES OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA TO REORIENT FAO ACTIVITIES TO FIELD PROJECTS, AND THE STRONG SUPPORT OF GROUP-77 COUNTRIES FOR THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROPOSAL. IMPLICIT IN THEIR REMARKS WAS AN ATTRIBUTION OF THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM TO THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD EARLY GIVEN A QUALIFIED SUPPORT TO A LIMITED PROGRAM. THE FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD JUDGED THAT THERE WAS NO PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE SAID THAT INTERNALLY HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NEVER COME AROUND TO FULLY ACCEPTING IT.

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FOR IO ASSISTANT SECRETARY MAYNES

5. I RAISED WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES THE QUESTION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PERSUADING DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA TO AGREE TO, OR TO NEGOTIATE WITH HIM, THE ABANDONMENT OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL IN THE 1978-1979 BUDGET PROPOSAL. I CITED THE VARIOUS BARGAINING CHIPS, ON AN ILLUSTRATIVE BASIS, LISTED IN REF C. THE GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE ANY OF THE BARGAINING CHIPS LISTED, EXCEPT THE EMERGENCY FUND, WOULD BE AT ALL ATTRACTIVE TO SAOUMA. THE ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE SAID HE SAW NO CHANCE AT ALL TO PERSUADE SAOUMA TO ABANDON THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, WHICH IS THE "KEystone OF HIS NEW POLICY". THE REPRESENTATIVES OF BELGIUM, CANADA, FRANCE, GERMANY, THE NETHERLANDS, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM ENDORSED THIS VIEW, SOME POINTING OUT ALSO THAT THE GROUP-77 COUNTRIES FIRMLY SUPPORT THE PROGRAM. NO ONE EXPRESSED A CONTRARY VIEW. I POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE FORMAL-JURIDICAL UN STRUCTURE ENABLES THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO OUTVOTE US, THE FACTS OF LIFE ARE RECOGNIZED, AND IF THE COUNTRIES THAT MAKE THE FAR-GREATEST FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS SPEAK UP, THEY WILL BE LISTENED TO.

6. AS TO PERSUADING SAOUMA AND THE GROUP-77 COUNTRIES IN THE LONGER RANGE, FOR THE 1980-1981 BUDGET, FOR EXAMPLE, TO ABANDON THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, MANY OF THE REPRESENTATIVES WERE SKEPTICAL. SEVERAL OF THEM, HOWEVER, SAID LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH A REDEFINITION OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, TO ELIMINATE CONFLICT WITH UNDP, OR THROUGH A THOROUGH EVALUATION AND RE-EXAMINATION OF THE PROGRAM, ON THE BASIS OF THE INSISTENCE OF MANY OF US THAT IT BE CONSIDERED AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM. THE BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE SAID THAT HAVING SUPPORTED THE PROGRAM LAST YEAR, OUR BEST APPROACH IS TO PRESS FOR AN EVALUATION, AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF JAPAN, THE NETHERLANDS, AND SWITZERLAND EXPRESSED SIMILAR VIEWS. THE UNITED KINGDOM CO-CHAIRMAN FAVORED REDEFINING THE PROGRAM IN TERMS OF A "QUICK-REACTION" PROGRAM, POINTING OUT THAT THE TOTAL COST AND SHORT-TERM LIMITATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, AND OTHER CRITERIA, RESULT IN FACT IN LITTLE DUPLICATION OF UNDP ACTIVITY.

(COMMENT: THESE CRITERIA WERE SUGGESTED

UNILATERALLY AND PRIVATELY BY THE UNITED STATES TO SAOUMA, WHO GENERALLY ACCEPTED OUR PROPOSALS, AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS ARE NOT FULLY AWARE OF THIS.) ITALY AND SWEDEN ALSO SPOKE IN FAVOR OF REDEFINING THE PROGRAM, THE LATTER SAYING IT HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE PROGRAM IF IT HAD "PROFILE OF ITS OWN", DIFFERENT FROM UNDP. THE U.K. CO-CHAIRMAN TOOK ISSUE WITH AN IDEA OF RE-DEFINING THE PROGRAM AS AN EMERGENCY PROGRAM, PREFERRING THE "QUICK-REACTION" FORMULATION. THE IDEA OF TURNING IT TOWARD POST-HARVEST LOSSES ELICITED A COMMENT BY THE US AID REPRESENTATIVE THAT THIS MIGHT CONFLICT PARTICULARLY WITH UNDP PROJECTS.

7. AS FOR WILLINGNESS TO JOIN WITH THE UNITED STATES IN A DEMARCHE, ALMOST ALL OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF COURSE SAID SIMPLY THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO SEEK INSTRUCTIONS. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADA, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM NONETHELESS VOLUNTEERED PERSONAL COMMENT THAT THEY WERE REASONABLY SURE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE WILLING TO JOIN WITH US. THE MOST QUESTIONABLE COUNTRY APPEARS TO BE ITALY, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE HOST-COUNTRY STATUS. I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN MUSTER AN ALMOST COMPLETE SUPPORT OF THE GENEVA GROUP COUNTRIES FOR A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE, BUT I DOUBT THAT WE CAN GET MOST OF THEM TO OPPOSE OR VOTE AGAINST THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM IN THE 1978-1979 BUDGET PROPOSAL.

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8. IN ADDITION TO ASKING THE REPRESENTATIVES TO SEEK THE VIEWS OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS ABOUT JOINING WITH US IN A DEMARCHE, I ASKED THEM ALSO TO RIASE TWO OTHER QUESTION: A) A QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE LIMITATION OF THE FAO TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, AND B) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROCEDURE AND NEAR-FUTURE TIME FOR RE-EXAMINING AND EVALUATING THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM.

9. AFTER I LEFT THE MEETING, FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, THE GROUP CONSIDERED TWO OTHER RELATED MATTERS: A) THE BELGIAN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE NOTED THE RELEVANCE OF UNDP'S RECENT TENDENCY TO DESIGNATED ITSELF AS EXECUTING AGENCY FOR PROJECTS WHENEVER THEY INVOLVE MORE THAN ONE SPECIALIZED AGENCY, AS OPPOSED TO THE VIEW OF FAO AND OTHER SPECIALIZED AGENCIES THAT IN SUCH CASES THE SPECIALIZED AGENCY WITH PRIMARY INTEREST SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AS THE EXECUTING AGENCY, AND COORDINATE WITH THE OTHER AGENCIES INVOLVED, AND B) THE PROGRAM SUB-GROUP OF THE GENEVA GROUP WAS DIRECTED TO FULFIL THE GENEVA GROUP CONSULTATION LEVEL XIV DECISION TO DEFINE THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES OF FAO (PRACTICALLY THE WHOLE OF FAO ACTIVITIES, MINUS SOME ASPECTS OF THE COMMODITY AND CODEX ALIMENTARIUS ACTIVITIES), BUT TO FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM OF DEFINING WHICH FIELD PROJECT ACTIVITIES MIGHT BE UNDERTAKEN BY FAO AS OPPOSED TO THOSE FALLING WITHIN NORMAL UNDP ACTIVITIES.

10. I HAVE DEFERRED MY APPOINTMENT WITH DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA FROM MONDAY, MAY 2, TO SOME INDEFINITE TIME LATER IN THE DELAY MAY ENABLE ME TO HAVE THE VIEWS OF SOME OF THE OTHER GENEVA CGROUP COUNTRIES. THE MAY 2 DATE, IT WILL BE RECALLED, WAS ORIGINALLY SET BY WASHINGTON (REF C) BECAUSE OF THE SCHEDULE OF THE PROGRAM AND FINANCE COMMITTEES, WHICH IS NO LONGER AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. CONTRARY TO MY REQUEST APRIL 26 THAT HE DEFER DISCUSSING THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM, DIRECTOR-

GENERAL SAOUMA STRESSED THE PROGRAM PARTICULARLY IN HIS SPEECH TO
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THE COMBINED COMMITTEES ON APRIL 26. THE ONLY DEVELOPED COUNTRY
MEMBER OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, A SWEDE, IS ABSENT BECUASE OF
SEVERE LUMBAGO. THE PAKISTANI CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAS
BEEN UNABLE TO COME AT ALL, AND FAO HAS HAD TO CALL IN SENORA
BELLAVITA (PANAMA) FROM TOKYO IN ORDER TO HAVE A QUORUM. FINANCE
COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRMAN BEL HADJ AMOR (TUNISIA) IS REPORTEDLY DOING
A GOOD JOB, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
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